

**ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

A method that detects when an image is copied or scanned in order to reduce the production of fraudulent images. The invention allows an inspector to conduct an analysis of an image with a simple set of tools on site without the need to check a remote database through a network and look for duplicate images. This minimizes the infrastructure and cost required to implement the system. A local inspection can be made by scanning an image and decoding it with relatively inexpensive tools available on site. The invention accomplishes the foregoing by producing a fragile watermark image that produces a noticeable and measurable loss of information when it is reproduced. The loss of information is due to effects associated with scanning and printing processes.